**Document A**

Thomas Rowe Affidavit

# Original Transcription

Thomas Row (or Rowe) worked for the British Customs Service in the town of Salem, of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The British Customs Service was responsible for enforcing laws, including the Sugar Act, and collecting taxes (also known as duties). In September of 1768, Thomas Row reported a group of colonists secretly removing molasses from a ship to avoid paying taxes. The following day he was dragged to the Salem Common and violently attacked by a mob of outraged men. The mob included Richard Derby, his son, Elias Hasket Derby, and his son-in-law, George Crowninshield. This is Row’s statement to the Customs Service in Boston, describing his assault.

## **(Page 1)**

Copy of Thomas Row’s Affidavit concerning the insult he

received from the Mob at Salem.

I Thomas Row Tidesman in the Service

of His Majesty’s Customs at Salem & Marblehead

declare, and am ready to make oath, That –

on the 7th instant, being stationed upon duty at

Salem onboard the Brig Union Samuel Grant

Master from Martinico – and having unloaded

40 hogsheads of molasses into a sloop alongside

in the Channel, to lighten the Vessel, it was

found necessary as the Brig was war?ing in

to get to a wharf to cast off the sloop, which

was accordingly done, and she was moved to

a wharf out of my sight the Tide being so much

fallen that the Brig got aground, and could

not follow her – After fastening the hatches

of the Brig with the Kings Locks, and ???

the Sloop with the 40 hogsheads onboard, in

passing by the wharfs I heard the noise of ???

going, and saw a cask hoisting over the side of

a Schooner, which I reported immediately to

Mr. Savage Landwaiter, weigher, & Gauger, of

the Port, who was then in Bed, but rose very

soon and accompanied me near the place,

where we stood for some time, listening & could

plainly discover that Goods were unshipping

from a Schooner, whereupon Mr. Savage gave

immediate notice thereof to Mr. Moses, the

person stationed for that Vessel, and sent him

down to prevent the Goods being landed –

After this I returned to my station onboard

the

## **(Page 2)**

the Brig, and remained onboard till sun rising

in the morning, when I went on shore to visit

the Sloop with the 40 hogsheads onboard, and

removed her from the place where she then to

another Wharf – Between nine and ten in

the morning still being on board the Sloop –

a number of Sailors came onboard & forcibly

dragged me from thence to the Common, where

I was kept for the space of an hour, during which

time Henry Gardener Merchant of Salem

waxed the hair of my head with Balls of

Shoemakers Wax, and some amongst them

(I cannot say which) cut part of it off from

behind, then they divided then into two parties, one

of which went in quest of Mr. Savage & Mr.

Wood to inquire after the Author of the information,

the other carrying me to the Tree of Liberty,

and forced me to sit down under it for half

an hour – I was then marched by them to

seek for the other party, who were met with &

joined at the corner of Judge Lion’s house, headed

by Joseph Moses & Capt.n Lambert from whence they

proceeded with me a second time to the Common,

stripped off my Coat, Waistcoat, handkerchief &

hat tied my hands to a long pole & tarr’d me

all over, they afterwards put me in to a Cart,

my hands being still tied, and fixed two boughs

with spun yarn on each side of my head,

then I was stuck with feathers quite full over

my face, Head, Shirt, and trousers; but finding

the pole hindered the Cart from moving my

hands

## **(Page 3)**

hands were loosened from it, and one hand tied

to the side of the Cart and the other to my Thigh

in this miserable condition was I dragged along

by the Mob from the Common into the main street

where they put a cross made with sticks into

my hand, struck me several violent blows on

my head, and swore they would murder me

if I did not carry it upright – after which

I was again dragged through the street to

the house of Joseph Cabbet, who handed two

papers to the populace with the word Informer

wrote in Capitals which they pinned to my head

??? before and behind – in this shameful

manner I was conducted through the streets,

a live goose being repeatedly thrown at me,

and they stopped the Cart at the houses of

Mr. Turner, Mr. Dowse, Capt. Grant and the

Custom house, at each of which they gave

three cheers crying out that I was an

Informer then I was carried out of the Town

taken out of the Cart, unbound, and set at liberty

George Crowninshield pushing me by the

nip of my neck and said that if I returned to

that Town again I should loose my life.

And I further declare that Capt Lambert

Henry Gardner & George Crowninshield were

the principle directors & abettors of this Savage

brutality.

Thomas T Row

his mark

Castel William

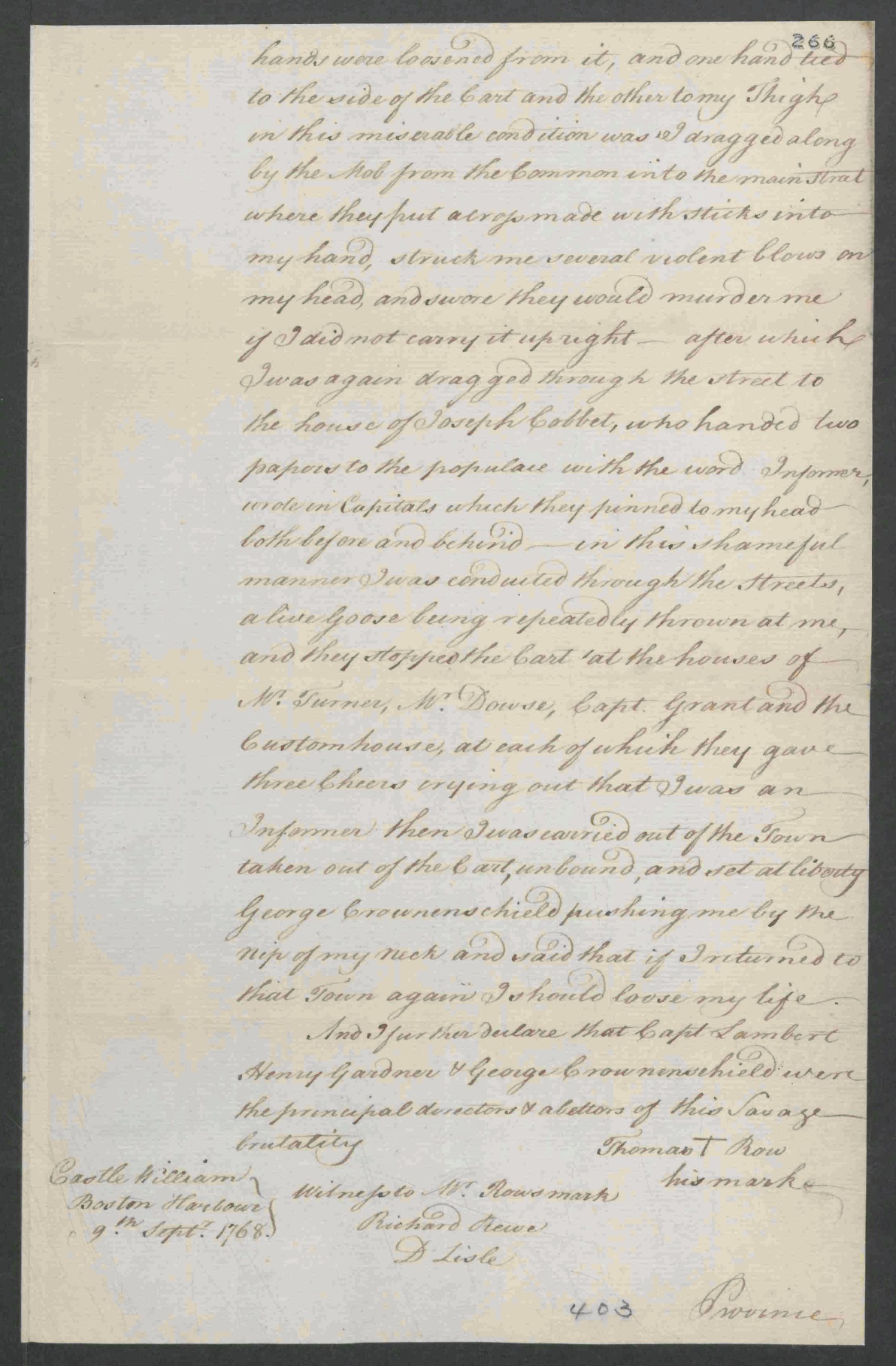
Boston Harbour Witness to Mr. Rows mark

9th. Sept. 1768. Richard ?ewe

D Lisle

**Document A**

***(Page 3 of 3)***



***Image Source***

The National Archives, United Kingdom. Copy of Thomas Row(e)'s Affidavit concerning the insult he received from the Mob at Salem. Dated Castle William, Boston Harbor, September 9, 1768. T 1/465/265-266.

**Document B**

Obed’s Broadside Advertisement

# Original Transcription

Historically, broadsides were announcements, news, proclamations, or advertisements printed on one side of a larger piece of paper and posted to spread information to the public.

Richard Derby was a ship captain, distillery owner, and wealthy Salem merchant. From primary source documents, we know he enslaved at least six people while living at his house on Derby Street in Salem. (The house still stands today and is a private residence.)

Derby paid to place this broadside in Salem in 1774. He also paid for the advertisement to appear in the Salem newspaper, “The Essex Gazette,” at least three times.

We have not been able to identify Obed in the archives after this advertisement. He is not listed in Richard Derby’s will nine years later. We have identified his birth, the births of his brother and his mother, and his parents’ marriage in the Cohasset vital records.

RAN-AWAY from the Subscriber last

Saturday, a *NEGRO MAN*, named

*Obed*, about 25 Years of Age somewhat

tall, his Skin very black his Nose uncommonly

long for a Negro he was born at Cohasset, in

this Province ; it is uncertain what Clothes he

had on as he carried away a considerable Quan-

tity with him, among which were a red Coat

with Brass Buttons, green Jacket and Breeches

with white Buttons : Whoever will take up and

secure him, or return him to his Master, shall

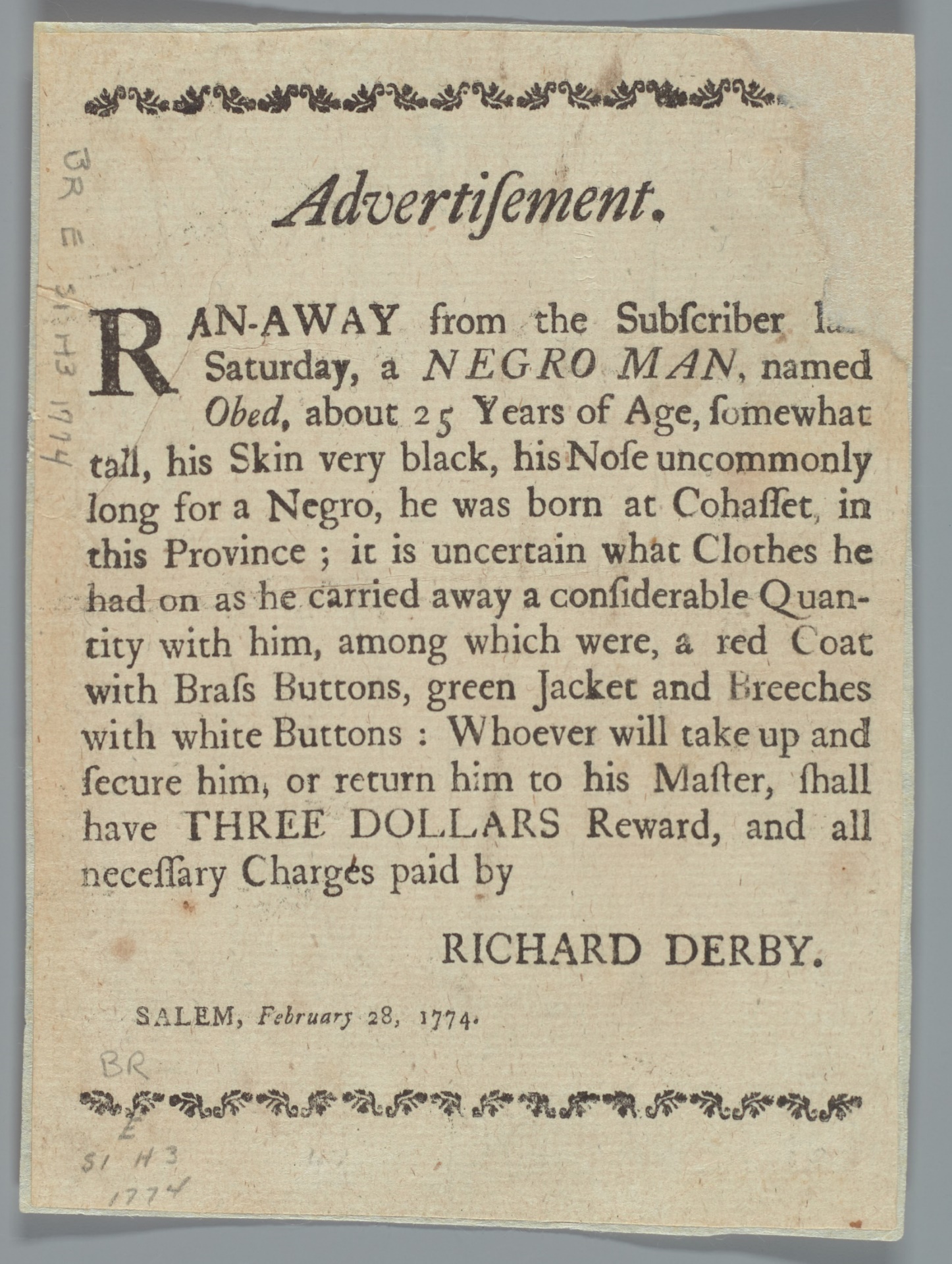
have THREE DOLLARS Reward, and all

necessary Charges paid by

RICHARD DERBY.

SALEM, *February 28, 1774*.

**Document B**



***Image Source***

Advertisement, 1774, Phillips Library Digital Collections (<https://pem.quartexcollections.com>).

**Supplemental Primary Source Documents**

**Document C**

Mr. Wood’s Affidavit Concerning the Mob at Salem

Original Transcription

Robert Wood was an agent for the British Customs Service in Salem. He witnessed the September, 1768 mob attack on Customs agent, Thomas Row. This is his statement to the Customs Service in Boston describing the attack. He names several Salem merchants who participated in the mob attack, including Richard Derby, his son Elias Hasket, and his son-in-law, George Crowninshield.

Copy of Mr. Wood’s Affidavit concerning the Mob at Salem

I Robert Wood Tide Waiter of his

Majesty’s Customs at Salem & Marblehead

do declare upon Oath that I was present

when Thomas Row was brought up to

the Office in a Cart drawn by the Mob,

who was tarred all over his Shirt and

Trousers and covered with feathers, and

I saw at the Head of the Mob Captain

Lambert, George Crowningshield,

Captain Richard Darbey, Hasket Darbey,

Captain Putingham, and Henry Gardner,

and Joseph Moses, who are the Persons

I took most Notice of at the Head of the

Mob; as Witness my hand.

(*Signed*) Robert Wood.

Province of the

Massachusetts Bay The above named Robert

Suffolk 9th September Wood made Oath to the Truth

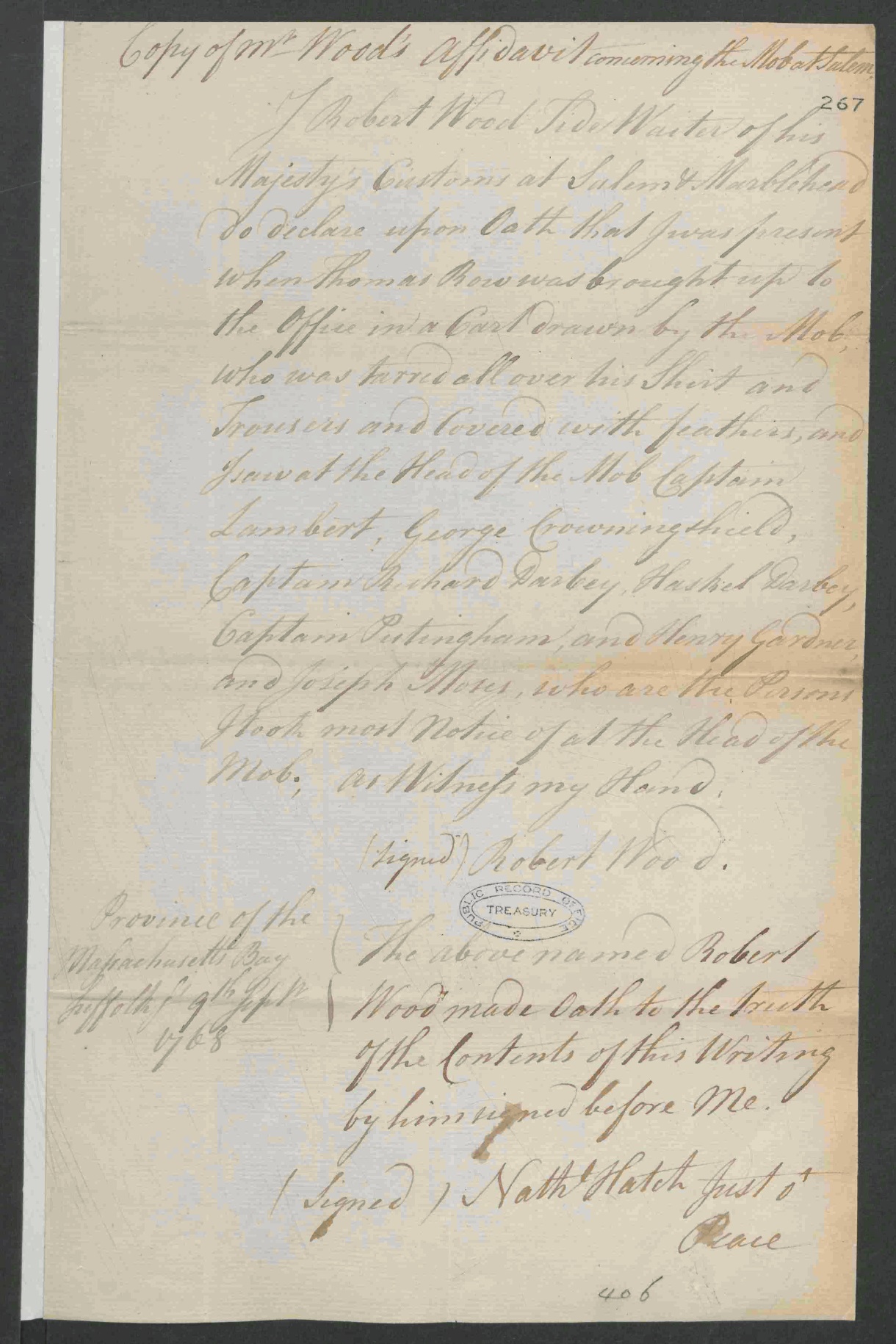
1768 of the Contents of this Writing

by him signed before me.

(*Signed*) Nathl Hatch Just of

Peace

**Document C**



***Image Source***

The National Archives, United Kingdom. Copy of Mr. Woods's Affidavit concerning the Mob at Salem. September 9, 1768. T 1/465/267-268.

**Document D**

Cohasset Vital Records: Births

Original Transcription

“Vital records” are records of life events such as birth, death, and marriage. These birth records are from the online database, “Early Vital Records of Massachusetts.” The free database holds information from church records, town records, private records, gravestone inscriptions, and newspaper articles from across Massachusetts.

**Cohasset Births**

NEGROES.

Asher, s. of Jo and Phillis, negro servants of John Jacobs and J. Bates, Bp. Dec. 29, 1745. C.R.I.

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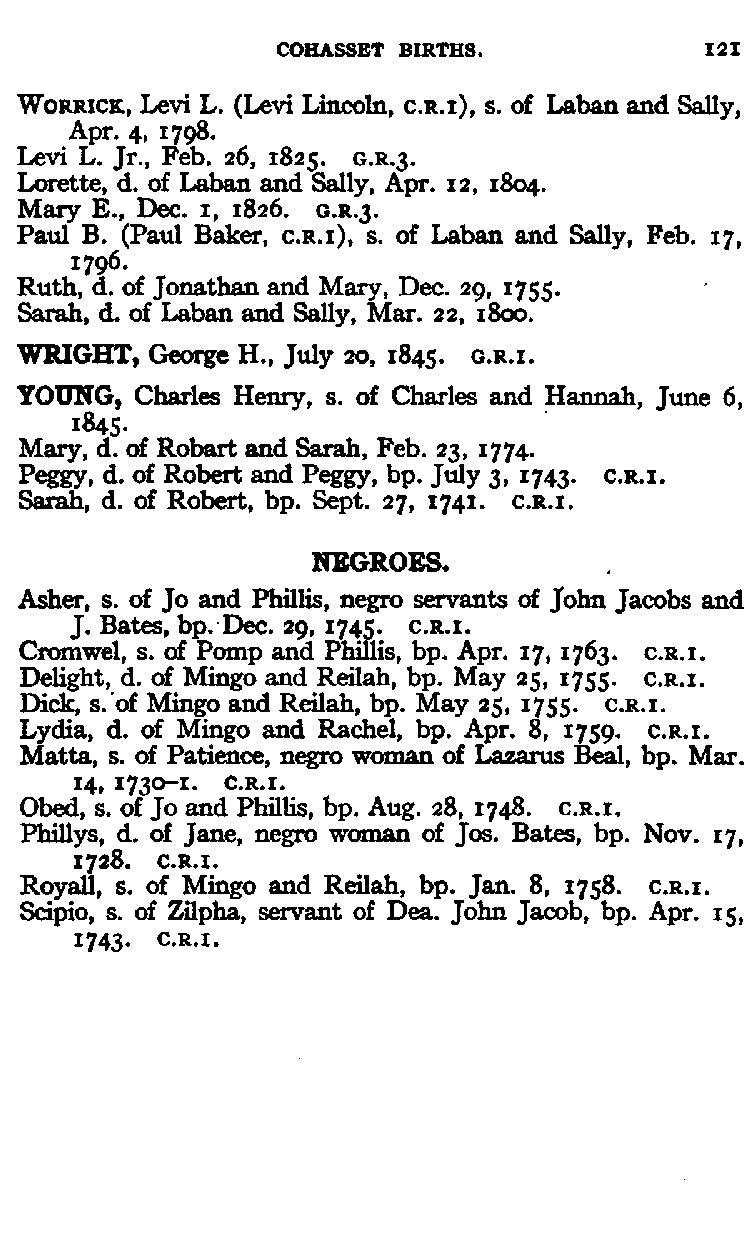
Obed, s. of Jo and Phillis, bp. Aug. 28, 1748. C.R.I.

Phillys, d. of Jane, negro woman of Jos. Bates, bp. Nov. 17, 1728. C.R.I.

…

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**Document D**



## **Image Source**

Early Vital Records of Massachusetts, From 1600 to 1850. [www.ma-vitalrecords.org](http://www.ma-vitalrecords.org)